

Aston Rowant Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Aston Rowant, Watlington, OX49 5SU

Inspection dates 26–27 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above the national average and the proportions of pupils making more than expected progress is high.
- Teaching is good and leads to pupils' good achievement. Most teachers are making effective use of the new tracking system to pinpoint what stage in their learning the pupils are at and what they need to do next to improve.
- Pupils are respectful towards each other and towards adults. Their behaviour is exemplary both in lessons and around the school. Their attendance is high and they feel happy and safe.
- The newly appointed headteacher works closely with the school's consultants and the governors to make positive changes and driving rapid improvements.
- The governors are well informed and are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school. They make sure that pupils' safety is given the highest priority.
- Parents and carers praise the work of the school, the headteacher and the staff, unreservedly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A small minority of pupils are not making the same accelerated progress as the rest. This is because some teaching is not fully effective in moving these pupils on to the next stage of their learning quickly enough.
- Marking is not always constructive enough to show what the pupils need to do next in their work.
- There has not yet been enough time for the recent changes to checking pupils' progress to have a full impact on improving the outcomes for all pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, six of which were joint observations with the headteacher. He also listened to pupils read and observed them during break time and around the school.
- A range of documentation was looked at, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan, the school's own assessment data, records of lesson observations, reports from the school's private consultant, and the school's safeguarding documentation. A wide range of pupils' books and a collection of examples of the school's work with pupils over a period of time was also examined.
- The inspector held meetings with the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors, the member of staff responsible for special needs, a group of pupils and also spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority and the school's private consultant.
- The inspector took account of the 50 responses to the on-line Parent View survey, four staff questionnaires and met with some parents and carers informally at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Graeme Burgess, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This primary school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Reception pupils are taught in a single age class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are in the same class, Years 3 and 4 are in the same class and Years 5 and 6 are in the same class.
- Since the last inspection the governing body has appointed a new headteacher who has been in post for four terms.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, school action plus, and those supported with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children or children of service families, is also below the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The school meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and leads to all pupils making at least good progress and maximising their achievement by ensuring that:
 - fully effective use is made of the school's data tracking system to identify those pupils who may be falling behind, and setting work that is matched closely to their needs and accelerates their learning
 - there is a better balance between the time the pupils spend going over previous work and the time they spend applying and practising the new skills that they are being taught
 - marking in books tells pupils what they have done well and what they need to do next in order to improve.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils in all year groups make good progress from their typically average starting points and some make exceptional progress, particularly in mathematics. Standards are typically above average by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching, including effective use of the new system of tracking pupils' progress. The good progress being made by all groups reflects the school's strong commitment to ensuring that all pupils succeed.
- Children in the Reception class thrive as a result of exciting experiences and activities which both challenge and support their good learning and development. Teachers' strong subject knowledge of phonics, for example, means that learning about sounds and letters is presented in an exciting and interesting way, capturing the attention of everyone. This leads to children making good, and sometimes exceptional, progress in communication, language and literacy. The above average standards reached in the phonics screening check in Year 1 reflect this.
- The curriculum successfully focuses on ensuring that pupils' learning is made real, and this engages their interest and leads to high-level motivation. For example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked independently and successfully when using their knowledge of the months of the year to investigate and record the dates of birth of their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are successfully meeting the targets set for them and make good progress. The staff know the pupils well as individuals and act quickly, when a need is identified, to locate the correct support from outside agencies. The school can point to some striking examples where this support has impacted positively on the outcomes for particular pupils, overcoming barriers to learning and allowing them to make good progress as a result.
- The majority of pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium funding make progress which is better than expected given their starting points. The school has used its funding to provide these pupils with extra support in lessons by appointing additional members of staff to work with them individually and in groups.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the on-line questionnaire are very positive about the progress their children are making at the school.
- A few pupils are not yet making the same rapid progress as their classmates because the work set for them is not at the right level of challenge. Teachers' increasingly effective use of the tracking system to pinpoint anyone in danger of falling behind is accelerating pupils' learning, but it is not yet outstanding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching in most subjects, including English and mathematics, is leading to most pupils making rapid progress and achieving successfully. Teachers have high expectations, plan interesting lessons and use questioning very skilfully to move learning forward. Pupils in Reception get an excellent start to their education as a result of being so well taught.
- The way in which teachers and teaching assistants frame their questions during guided reading sessions successfully extends pupils' understanding of the meaning of words. For example, in a lesson observed, once the class teacher had helped a pupil to read the word 'damaged' she added, 'And what do you think the word damaged means? Let's look at the sentences that have come before to see if we can work it out.' This demonstrates how thoughtful and precise questioning can encourage pupils to begin to think about how they can use other information around them, become more independent learners and deepen their knowledge and understanding.
- There is a very positive climate for learning within all classes as a result of the highly effective way in which staff manage behaviour. As a result, pupils listen carefully, are keen to engage

with the teacher, get on with their tasks independently and make good progress as a result.

- Additional adults in classes are effective in supporting pupils' learning, particularly those who are vulnerable or have special educational needs. These pupils benefit from their sensitive guidance, confidently access tasks and, as a result, enjoy success in their learning.
- Occasionally, in some lessons, teachers spend too much time going over work that has previously been learned or, for example, by asking pupils to prepare tables to record information. As a result, a few do not move on quickly enough to their set tasks and their progress is not as rapid as it could be.
- The quality of teachers' marking is typically encouraging but varies in its usefulness across the school and between subjects. For example, the best marking celebrates what the pupils have done well and points to the next steps to be taken in order to improve their work. However, not all marking provides such helpful feedback and this is a missed opportunity to accelerate progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding, and this has an extremely positive impact on the progress pupils make and the standards they achieve. This starts in the Reception class where children learn and play purposely together and behave well because the routines are clear and staff expectations are high.
- Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and respond well to support and guidance given by all adults. They are keen to talk to visitors about their work and show a real pride in their learning. They know about the importance of keeping safe and do not tolerate any form of discrimination or wrong attitudes of any kind.
- They believe that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are very rare in school, and that if they do occur they tell the headteacher. They say that the headteacher then speaks with these pupils straight away so that anything that is happening stops immediately.
- The views of the parents and the staff are overwhelmingly positive. Parents feel that the teachers know their children well as individuals, that they are kept safe and that they are happy and enjoy coming to school.
- Improvement in the behaviour of individual pupils, who find managing their own behaviour difficult at times, is excellent. This is because the school is fully inclusive and identifies quickly where social and emotional support of pupils is required. The relevant agencies are consulted and a support programme put in place to ensure that individuals have the very best possible opportunities to succeed.
- Attendance is higher than the national average and has been so for the last two years. Contact is always made with parents if pupils arrive late or are absent. This demonstrates the strong commitment of both the school and the parents to the pupils' education.

The leadership and management are good

- The recently appointed headteacher provides strong leadership with the clear emphasis given to teaching quality, learning and achievement and focus on checking progress driving good improvement. Staff share in her vision for taking the school forward. Senior leaders and teachers have taken on board the new tracking system that provides accurate information about pupils' starting points and the progress that pupils are making. However, there has not yet been sufficient time for its use to have full impact on accelerating the progress of all pupils.
- There is effective monitoring of teaching and its impact on learning. The headteacher has worked closely with the school's consultant, monitoring work and carrying out paired lesson observations aimed at further raising the standard of teaching. Paired observations with the inspector found that the headteacher's lesson observations are accurate and that well-focused

feedback is improving quality and consistency of best teaching practice. All teachers meet termly with the headteacher to check the progress that the pupils are making.

- The performance management arrangements, to ensure that teaching staff are effective, are robust. Performance targets are linked to the progress of pupils they teach and decisions about pay are closely linked to how successfully teachers meet their targets.
 - The local authority has been giving light touch support through checks on performance data.
 - Pupil premium funding is used highly effectively to help pupils at risk of underachieving to succeed. In fact, the majority of the pupils identified for this additional support are making progress which is exceeding expectation. This is because the funding has been used to provide additional support for small-group work and individual tuition. In addition, pupils who are on the special needs register are tracked closely and targeted intervention is tailored to match their needs. These actions are helping pupils who were behind in their learning to catch up.
 - The school promotes the pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development exceptionally well through the good range of subjects they study. These include regular visits from the local vicar, trips and residential experiences. In addition, excellent arrangements are in place for pupils to use the local leisure centre so that any physical needs are not neglected as a result of the school not having its own hall. A range of before- and after-school clubs and activities meets the interests of the pupils well.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The headteacher keeps the governing body well informed regarding the progress of the pupils in school and, as a result, the governors have an accurate understanding of what needs to be done next in order to improve standards. They know about the quality of teaching and are fully aware of their responsibilities regarding teachers' pay and the systems for setting performance management targets. They work closely with the headteacher to prioritise the allocation of school funds in order to improve outcomes for pupils. They ensure that the school's funds are maximised in order to help pupils achieve well, including those eligible for the pupil premium, and regularly review how the school's accommodation can be enhanced for the benefit of the pupils. They ensure that procedures for keeping pupils safe meet requirements by attending relevant training.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	123124
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	412122

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Mullins
Headteacher	Judith Lawson
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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